

# State FFA President's Roots Run Deep In Agriculture

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of interviews on June 14 during State Activities Week at Penn State.

Further coverage of State Activities Week begins on page B13 of this edition of *Lancaster Farming*.

"It wasn't easy," he smiles, "but there was pure excitement in the air (at the competition). My focus has always been state officer so when my name hadn't been announced by the time the last position came up, I just held my breath."

Bittner's mother Diane and his adviser, Michael Clark, attended the competition and right before the last name was called, they both told David they just knew he was going to be the president.

Bittner gives credit to his advisers Doyle Paul and Michael Clark for their support and help in keeping him "on track" for the state officer position. Clark took over as the agricultural teacher for Paul at the beginning of David's senior year during the 2001-2002 school year. Clark served as the state FFA vice president in 1996.

"It's a difficult process switching ag teachers your last year of high school but I made it work for me," he said. "You had to get used to a whole different teaching style. It definitely made me stronger in ways and because Mr. Clark was a state officer, it made me want to do the exact same thing and become a state officer. Mr. Clark didn't say 'you are going to be a state officer, he said you are a state officer.'"

He says that Doyle Paul, the longtime agricultural teacher at Berlin, gave him a good foundation and kept the FFA program going strong throughout the years. There are currently 90 FFA members at Berlin Brotherhood.

Bittner no doubt takes this role very seriously and plans to put forth as much effort as possible to represent FFA in the most dignified manner.

"At first, some people asked me 'are you getting paid for this,'" and I told them 'no, I don't need paid because I love it so much and am proud to represent FFA in this way.'"

Bittner believes FFA changed his view of life and helped him focus on his future. He wants to share as much about the organization as possible with others throughout the state and region.

"As state president, I am in charge of not only leading ten officers but basically I am in charge of leading 8,000 members across the state. I take this role very seriously," he explained.

Bittner has been accepted at Penn State University and plans to major in agricultural and extension education but with his responsibilities as state president, he has decided to take a leave of absence for one year before beginning his full-time studies.

"When I joined FFA, I knew I wanted to become a teacher and share my roots," he said.

Bittner's roots run deep into farming. His family farm has been a working family farm for six generations. His parents,



David Bittner of Berlin in Somerset County takes his new role as state FFA president very seriously. Bittner plans to delay his first year of college at Penn State to fulfill his responsibilities as the state president.

Diane and Barry Bittner, farm about 300 acres and milk about 50 cows, primarily Holstein but also Brown Swiss, Jersey and Guernsey animals.

His brother, Lance, who served as the state FFA sentinel last year (2001-2002), plans to stay on the farm and continue dairying. His younger brother Kevin, also a FFA member, is 16 years old and junior at Berlin High School.

"I love farming. It's my roots and the way I was brought up and the way I see it now, it's my

future," said Bittner. "It's an awesome feeling to know you have your own business."

"Even though there are challenges involved with the financial aspects of farming, it's still not really working because we love what we do. It's a living but it's fun."

From June 25 to July 3, Bittner completed state officer training in Bethel. The end of July, he will attend the state officers' conference in Delaware.

Bittner has already submitted his letter of intent for national officer competition, which will be

conducted after his full year has expired next October in Louisville, Ky. Last year, there were 38 competing for six spots.

Bittner's mother believes the state officer position is one of leadership and privilege.

"It changes them from when they first take office to when they are done," said Diane, referring to her son Lance, who recently finished his role as state FFA sentinel.

"In life you have followers and leaders, and when they come through this, they are definitely leaders."

## Golf Tournaments Benefit FFA Foundation

DUNCANSVILLE (Blair Co.) — The 10th annual Fore FFA 2002 golf tournaments will be held Monday, July 15, at Foxchase and Galen Hall Golf Courses in Lancaster County and on Monday, Aug. 12, at Scotch Valley Country Club in Duncansville, Blair County.

The event benefits Pennsylvania FFA Foundation Inc.

"The tournaments originally started as a one-course event ten years ago, but two years ago we were selling out at the two courses in Lancaster so we decided to split the event into two locations," said Kerry Richards, secretary for the FFA Foundation.

Last year, there were 250 golfers on the two courses at the Lancaster County event and 152 at Scotch Valley.

Hatfield Quality Maintenance in Lancaster is sponsoring the Lancaster County two-course event and Hoss's will sponsor Scotch Valley.

According to Richards, the whole purpose of the event is raise funds to support nearly 8,000 FFA members in Pennsylvania for various activities.

For example, some of the funds raised will go towards the Legislation Leadership Conference held every March in Harrisburg. At this conference, FFA students are able to participate in a mock simulation of legislature and meet with legislators for breakfast.

Funds will also be channeled to various Career Development events, which range from agricultural mechanics to floriculture and any other projects that are taught in the classroom and put into practical application. Students can compete regionally or nationally with their Career Development projects.

"In addition to golfing, other

money is raised through an auction following dinner," explained Richards.

Everything from 76ers (basketball) tickets to student-made projects, like picnic tables and bird boxes, are auctioned off. Also, a show sheep is auctioned off. Although the purchaser does not get to keep the sheep, his or her name will be announced every time the sheep is showed.

Refreshment carts will be provided on the courses and lunch will be served. Prizes will be awarded in team and individual contest categories. A complimentary happy hour will be scheduled before dinner.

There will also be a shot-

gun scramble.

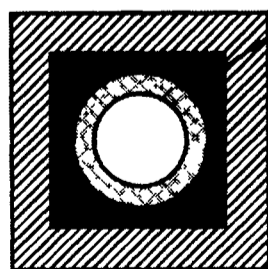
In addition, all 11 FFA officers will be present at both events to answer any questions about their careers in FFA or the organization itself.

"All the FFA officers will be there because we like to promote our quality youth," stressed Richards. "Last year's group (of FFA officers) was a great group but this year they seem to exceptionally good. These students are the leaders of the community later on in life."

Richards also serves as a Penn State University pesticide education coordinator. Her position with the FFA Foundation is part-time.

"I believe so much in what this organization does for the youth," said Richards. "These events give sponsors a chance to see what they are supporting and how it is benefiting these students. In showcasing these outstanding officers we show what FFA is all about and it makes these events worth all the work."

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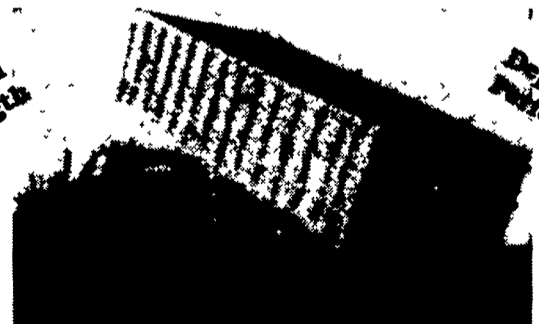
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